

**STATEMENT ON THE CONFERENCE REPORT ON U.S.  
TROOP READINESS, VETERANS'  
HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (H.R. 1591)**

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the conference agreement on H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act.

The passage of this very important bill will be the first time that Congress has moved to hold President Bush and his administration accountable for their execution of the Iraq war. As a citizen of this great nation, I share the frustration of the American public over the Bush administration's policy of carrying out an open ended commitment in Iraq. This is why I support this legislation because it is the first step to bringing our troops home safely and responsibly.

H.R. 1591 will for the first time require President Bush to certify that the Iraqi government is meeting diplomatic and security benchmarks. If he makes that certification, deployment shall begin no later than October 1, 2007, with the goal of completing the redeployment within 180 days. After that period, a limited number of U.S. forces could remain in Iraq for force protection, training and equipping Iraqi troops, and targeted counterterrorism options. Since President Bush has shown a tin ear by failing to listen to the American public's discontent concerning the Iraq war, it is the responsibility of Congress to lead America out of this war. By sending this strong piece of legislation to the president, we are one step closer to reaching that goal.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1591, and begin the process of bringing an end to President Bush's misadventure in Iraq.